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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Afghan Goods Go Global in Dubai

Afghan entrepreneurs promoted their products to thousands of international participants in Dubai at Gulfood 2011



International buyers sample Afghanistan's produce, including dried fruit and nuts, pomegranates, and honey at Gulfood 2011 in Dubai.

USAID facilitated meetings between the Afghan exhibitors and importers and buyers from different parts of the world to build the foundation for business deals and expand its reach into international markets.

Afghanistan shared its sweetest treasures in cuisine and drink with thousands of international participants who attended the world's largest annual trade show for the hospitality, food, and beverage industries. Gulfood 2011 in Dubai featured 3,800 exhibitors, 81 international pavilions, and 55,000 buyers from 152 countries.

With the support of USAID, 25 Afghan businesspeople attended the premier event and displayed their fresh fruit, dried fruit, nuts, vegetables, saffron, honey, jam, and other agricultural produce during the four days of the exhibition at the Dubai World Trade Center. Seven of the 30 local suppliers were women's groups that are actively producing and marketing fresh produce and processed food markets.

"Gulfood beat my expectations," said Mahooba Waizi, head of the Afghan Women's Business Council and one of the participants. "We received many great remarks from visitors to the pavilion and contact numbers from more than 40 companies across the world. Buyers were very interested in our dried and fresh fruit, and there was a great deal of interest in saffron. Everybody was very happy with the outcome."

USAID also used the opportunity to organize commercial trips throughout Dubai for the Afghan participants. Discussions with Gulfood buyers as well as visits to fruit and vegetable markets and high-profile retailers like Carrefour and Delmonte helped the Afghan exporters learn about international requirements which can increase the quality of their produce and boost exports.

"We learned a lot about advertising, packaging, marketing, and displaying products," Waizi said. "We learned how to communicate with international buyers and how to promote our products. Gulfood was extremely useful for us."

This marked the third year that Afghanistan has participated in the Gulfood Exhibition in Dubai. USAID uses commercial missions and participation in trade shows in international markets to open up new markets for Afghan produce and to introduce Afghan businesspeople to international sanitary, customs, and logistics requirements.